



## Case Study

Client	University of Kent
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## Background

The University of Kent is in the UK's top ten universities for student satisfaction of course quality.

With 24 departments and 40 specialist research centres spanning the sciences, technology, medical studies, the social sciences, arts and humanities, the University's research has led to significant breakthroughs, including the identification of the link between BSE and certain forms of animal feed, and discovering of an antibiotic that combats MRSA.

Red Bullet successfully won the prestigious contract to re-design the Student Data System (owned by MIS department – student services) which is arguably the most important and sensitive data held on all students attending the University.

The system gives web access to their entire student record and covers payment, courses, modules undertaken, timetables and personal information.





# Brief

We were challenged to re-design the user interface of the student data system with a focus on simplified navigation and front-loaded 'most used' content/functionality.

The University has a dedicated web team who technically can achieve great things. They felt that we could offer them a level of user-centric design that was a skill they do not currently hold in-house.

There was also a requirement to make the system more engaging.

The screenshot shows the University of Kent Student Portal interface. The browser address bar displays the URL: <https://portal.kent.ac.uk/uPortal/tag.686e9c20399ee38e.render.userLayout>. The page header includes the University of Kent logo, navigation links (Student guide, SDS, Library, News, WebCT, Careers), and a search bar. The main content area is personalized for user Johnson J. and features several sections:

- Choose a section:** SDS home, Modules, Assessments.
- Directory:** Search for staff or students by surname.
- Kentmail:** Shows a 20 MB quota with 46% usage and a 'Go To Kentmail' button.
- Templeman Library Account:** Links to 'Items I have', 'Fines and Fees', and 'Access My Library Account'.
- Course Timetable (beta):** Displays the selected week (Week 1, 29 September) and lists modules for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.
- Exam Timetable (beta):** Lists examination dates and locations for modules like CO324 Computer Systems and EL334 Internet Programming with Java.



## Research

The University were not able to provide us with analytical statistics on current usage as there was no mechanism in place.

We requested and were provided with a ghost login to the system (after stringent secure access mechanisms were put in place) and full student data was mirrored from an old inactive account to give us access to all areas of the system. The system generated PHP pages on the fly dependant on what information was held against each student so we had to ensure that we had access to all pages that can possibly be generated.

Focus groups were established and free discussion was encouraged. This enabled us to gauge general usage of across a range of technical abilities.

Secondary focus groups were under a more controlled environment where everybody responded to the same set of questions. All members of the focus groups were given access to our project management tool where we had the ability to have on-line discussions and receive feedback from everybody involved on the different stages of the visual development. This was particularly well received as it suited the target demographic.



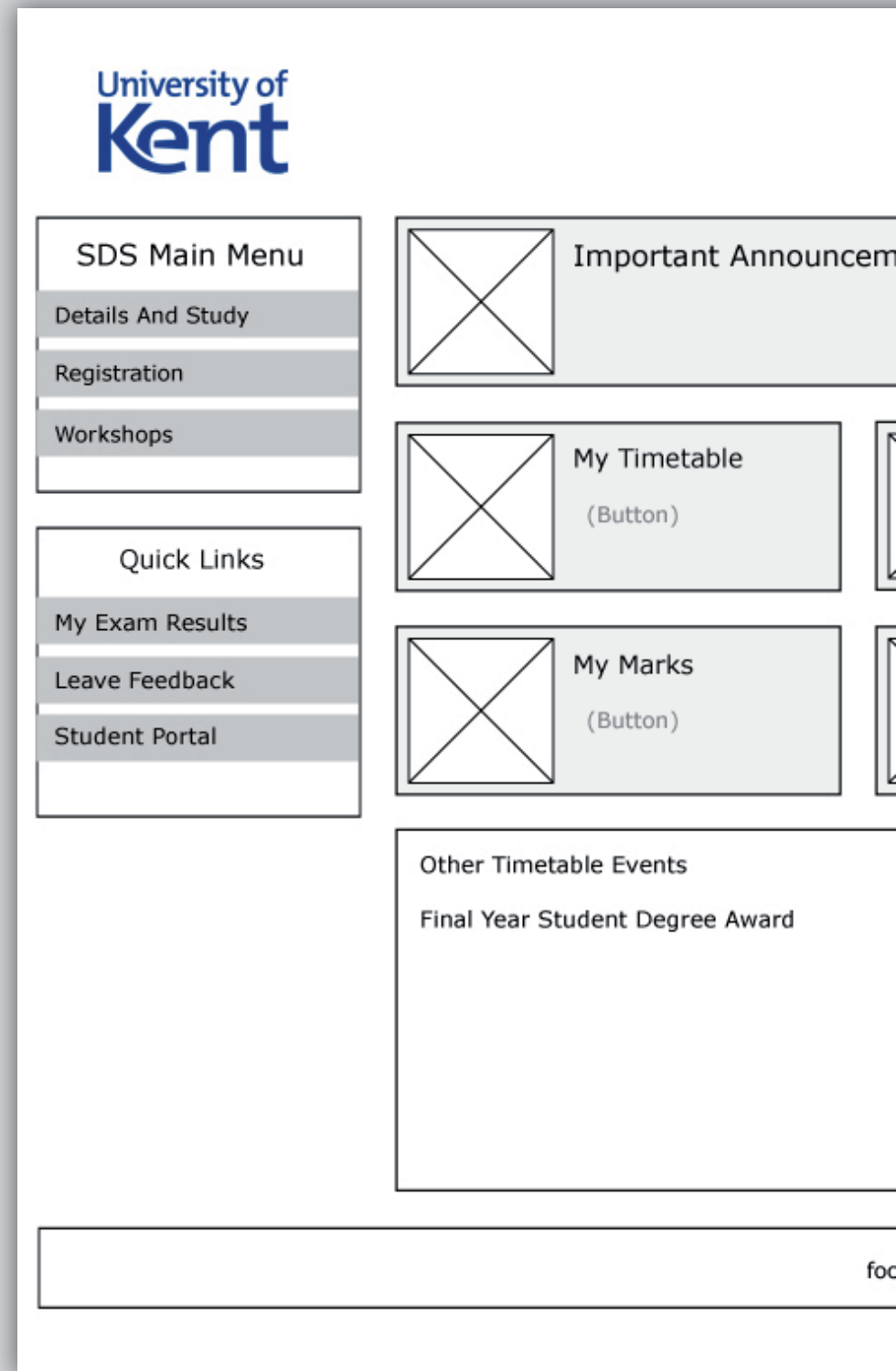


## Approach

Following the user study, we provided a series of prototypes based around an agile iterative methodology.

We quickly identified how to improve the navigation by presenting a new tree structure delivered via an uncluttered side navigation. This enabled the University to deliver relevant key messages as news flashes in the vacant real estate at the top of the page. The feedback from the student focus groups was invaluable throughout the design process.

One of the key changes that was made to the system was to the landing page where we designed a new content focused dashboard view where students could view top level information 'at a glance' as an activity feed. This enables simple one click access to specific details pages which reduced the time required spent using the navigation.

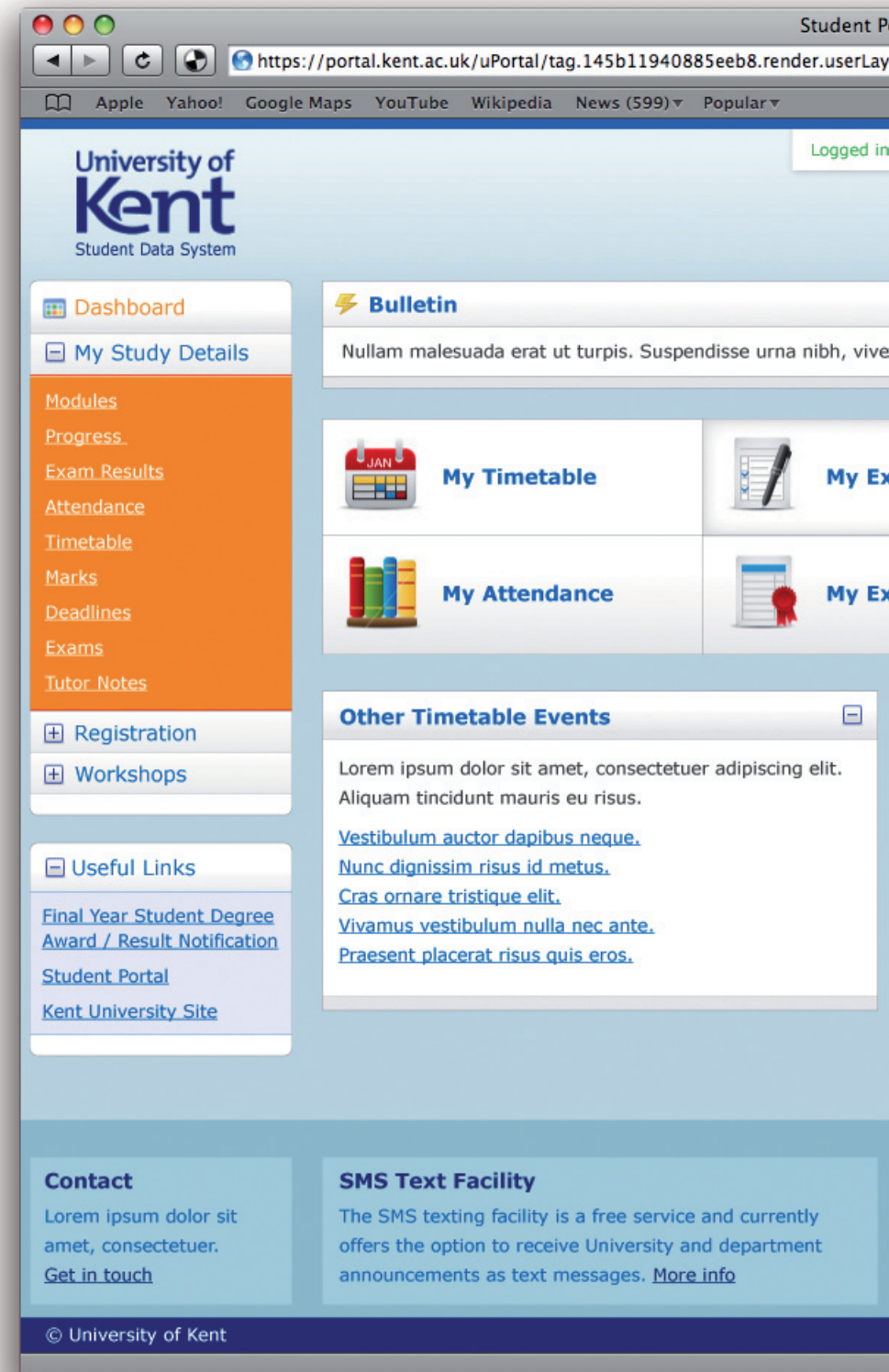




# Result

The delivery of the final visuals received accolade from the focus groups as “unbelievably better!”

The new look and feel is currently being implemented by the internal team at the University and full tracking is to be implemented to gauge the usage accurately.





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